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on human affairs. After Professor Toy's paper, two native Arabs were introduced, who played on their strange musical instruments, danced, and chanted some of their songs.

Helen Leah Reed, Secretary.

CINCINNATI. — *December 14, 1897.* The Society met at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. George A. Thayer. The programme, a symposium on Folk-religion, consisted of the following numbers: 1. "The Religion of the Tsimshian Indians," by Mr. Edward Marsden, an Alaska Indian, student of theology at the Lane Seminary. 2. "The Indian Messiah-Religion, or the Ghost-Dance of 1892," by Dr. C. D. Crank. 3. "Religion of Ancient Egyptians," by Mr. R. B. Spicer.

January 11, 1898. The Society met at the residence of Miss Laws. A motion was made and carried that a committee be appointed to look into the feasibility of establishing a library. Mr. King, Miss Laws, and Dr. Lindahl were appointed members of the committee. The lecturer of the evening, Dr. J. D. Buck, treated his subject, "The Separable Soul," ably and exhaustively. He quoted numerous instances of barbarous and semi-barbarous races where the existence of the soul was founded on the belief that the shadow, echo, dreams, etc., are the soul separated from the body for the time being. He also gave some instances of the belief in either permanent or temporary existence of the soul *after* death, among barbarous or semi-civilized people.

February 8. The meeting was held at the Woman's Club rooms. Mrs. Josephine Woodward, whose father was an Indian agent, and who therefore had spent all her early life among the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians, gave a very interesting account of their daily life, their customs and ceremonies.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

BOOKS.

THE LEGEND OF SIR GAWAIN. Studies upon its original scope and significance. By JESSIE L. WESTON, translator of Wolfram von Eschenbach's Parzival. (Grimm Library, No. 7.) David Nutt, London. 1897. Pp. xiv, 117.

One of the most bitterly contested as well as most obscure problems of mediæval literary history is the degree in which French mediæval romances must be supposed to have derived their material from Celtic sources, that is, to say from the contemporary folk-lore of Wales or Brittany. This question is not altogether a mere dispute of scholars, but has wide human relations, as affecting the question of the relation of mentality to race. Arthurian and other "British" narratives, in which are connected the conceptions of love and adventure, begin a new development in literature. If it could be shown that essential qualities of such fictions belonged to Celts as Celts, that a particular taste for marvel, a nature peculiarly passionate,

and a character remarkably sensitive belonged to their inherited intellect and fancy, it would be possible to add the fame of Celts to that of races that are presumed to have contributed elements to the world's thought. Such is naturally the idea of writers who have a strain of Celtic blood, and of scholars who spend their lives in examining Celtic literature; under the influence of such preconceived notions, the subject is treated with an energy which imports a spirit of warfare into the peaceful realm of scholastic investigation.

The problem is rendered more difficult, and perhaps insoluble, by the lack of material. There certainly did exist a mass of mediæval Welsh Arthurian literature, having its roots in a remote past; but this literature has survived only in a few compositions of a relatively late date, the production of *littérateurs*, and too remote from popular tradition to serve as guides. The work of the Anglo-Norman or French writers, who occupied themselves with Arthurian themes at the time when that material was first introduced to attention, that is, to say before the middle of the twelfth century, has entirely vanished; of the French romances of the second generation only very few have remained, and those so sophisticated as possibly to bear but small resemblance to the essays of predecessors. Under such circumstances, criticism becomes speculation, and the conclusion of a scholar usually only his way of accounting to himself for an impression which has forced itself on his mind, and which, before he becomes aware, has controlled his inferences.

In French poetic romances, the chief knight of the Round Table is that nephew of Arthur whose name, in French verse, is spelled *Walwain* or *Gauvain* (g, in this case, being an orthographic equivalent for a foreign w). The character of the knight constitutes an ideal embodiment of courtesy. In consequence of this excellence, he is described as especial protector of undefended ladies, while writers desirous to introduce into society a new hero find *Gawain* a valuable chaperon. Such portraiture seems modern and French; it is allowed that ancient Welsh epos could have known nothing of the refinements of mediæval courts. If it could be determined what part the Briton played in the ancient Cymric stories, and what alteration the likeness underwent, the comparison would be instructive; and it is to this difficult task that Miss Weston has addressed herself.

The name *Walwen* is first mentioned by William of Malmesbury, who makes him a nephew of Arthur; he is an adversary of the son of Hengist the Saxon, and is expelled from his hereditary possessions in Galloway; he perishes at sea as an exile. Geoffrey of Monmouth also describes *Walgainus* as a nephew of the king, but his account is otherwise quite inconsistent; at the age of twelve years the young knight, who has been educated in Rome, appears in the continental camp of Arthur, and never comes in contact with Saxons. The divergence seems to give ground for the assumption, that before the appearance of Geoffrey's work various accounts had existed respecting the life of the hero.

Welsh literature, strangely enough, knows nothing of *Walwen*. Arthur's nephew appears and plays a prominent part, but bears the name of *Gwalch-*

mei. The divergency may be variously accounted for. The original name may have been Walwen, for which bards substituted the epithetic title Gwalchmei; or the two names may have had no original relation. In the latter case, the designation Walwen may not have been of Cymric origin.

Neither the historical nor linguistic difficulties are considered by the author of this treatise, who concerns herself solely with interpretation of the romances. Numerous tales are preserved in which Gawain figures as hero, but of an episodic character, and giving no information respecting the biography of the actor. Of these the most important is that of Crestien of Troyes, who devotes to Gawain a portion of his last poem (*Perceval*). In this story the knight is made to visit a castle beyond a river, in which his grandmother, Igerne, has sought shelter, and protected herself by magic spells; in the vicinity the knight encounters a scornful damsel, who involves him, in order to gratify her own desire for vengeance on an enemy, in an encounter with a redoubtable antagonist; but it turns out that the latter is both a hereditary enemy of Gawain and in love with the sister of the latter. The story being incomplete, it is not at all clear what was to have been its issue, or that the entire narrative is anything more than an episode. Miss Weston, however, thinks that she finds evidence sufficient to justify the conjecture that the tale is a recast of an ancient Celtic legend, in which the hero was made to visit a world beyond the waters, and there to have encountered a fairy, in whose service he performed feats which furnished the basis of the many mediæval compositions concerned with his history.

What is there, in the portrait of Gawain as depicted by French authors, which can answer to an ancient Celtic hero? Two traits are mentioned. First, the strength of Gauvain is said (first by a continuator of Crestien) to have varied according to the time of the day, a manner of description supposed to indicate a solar hero; secondly, he is exceptional among Arthurian personages in being provided with a steed having a proper name, Gringalet. Now the vicissitudes of this name are curious. Crestien represents Gawain as setting out with seven horses, of which he sends back all but one, le gringalet, or gingalet (*Perceval*, ed. Potvin, line 7583). This word, as used by the trouvère, is obviously not a proper name, but a common noun. Horses are usually designated by their color; and the obscure appellation may have had such significance. Later writers did not understand the epithet, and accordingly altered the title into a proper name. In the eighth poem of the old Welsh manuscript called the Black Book of Caermarthen, written about the end of the twelfth century, Gwalchmei is said to have had a horse named Keincaled. It seems plain that, according to any proper rule of critical logic, the Welsh designation also must be held to have been a misinterpretation of the epithet given by Crestien; and the circumstance goes to show that mediæval Arthurian Welsh literature was affected by contemporary French compositions. If space served, it could be shown that the alternation of force attributed to Gawain, which J. Rhys and G. Paris consider a solar quality, may equally be the result of a misunderstanding, and by no means an inheritance from ancient Welsh

mythology. What has here been said may be sufficient to show that Miss Weston is mistaken in the supposition that her comparisons affect the still undetermined problem of Celtic sources.

The mediæval spelling of the name of the poet here mentioned was Crestien de Troies. Potvin, in his edition of the *Perceval*, incorrectly printed the name as Chrestien, and this error has been followed by several English writers. German scholars either give the name as Crestien, or (as in Förster's critical edition) translate it into the German equivalent, Christian von Troyes. French writers render it into modern form, Chrétien de Troyes. It is not clear why English authors should follow this example; we think it would be better to adhere to the mediæval designation, and speak of the trouvère as Crestien of Troyes. In the volume before us the name is spelled Chrétien; the circumflex is no doubt an oversight of proof-reading.

W. W. Newell.

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